

The Anatomy Of Unbelief April 3, 2016

I am glad you have chosen to get up leave your house and come and worship the Lord this morning wonderful that you are here. Let's pray together Father thank you thank you for Your Word and we are about to walk into this morning. Father I pray that our hearts would be completely opened that as well as with an invitation that you would walk in to our lives in a very special way today. Lord open our minds open our lives so that when we leave this place we will be thinking differently and deciding to live differently because of You. In Jesus name we pray Amen. Take your bibles turn to Mark 10 and as you are turning there I want to share with you that today I just felt impressed that I needed to address a very important issue. Following big days like Easter big days like Christmas it is interesting how the church gets so packed full of people and then the days following not so much. What is up with that? Is there a lack of commitment? Is there a lack of faith? Is there a lack of real belief and discipleship? You know I really believe with all of my heart that not everyone that appears to be believers in Christ are truly followers of Jesus. There is a parable that Jesus told about ten virgins only half of them had oil in their lamp oil was always symbolic of the Holy Spirit. There are some who believe that only about fifty percent of those today claiming to be followers of Jesus truly have had a true conversion experience. I tend to believe that as well because not all that appears to be really is. But what amazes me is that people can be so close to the Kingdom of God hear the Word preached hear the Word taught see the Word of God in action in people's lives to be so close to the movement of God the hand of Jesus and still not have a full blown commitment to the things of Christ. It still blows my mind away however at the same time I look at the passage that we are about to read today and understand from scripture that you can come right in the actual presence of Jesus and hear His Word but still not believe. What is up with that? I don't know fully but today we are going to examine this passage in a little more detail that maybe you ever looked at it before as I read to you the traditional story of the rich young ruler. Why don't you follow along with me as we look at the Anatomy of Unbelief there in verse 17 the Bible says this in Mark 10. As Jesus started on His way a man ran up to Him and fell on His knees before Him. Good Teacher he asked what must I do to inherit eternal life? Why do you call me good Jesus answered no one is good except God alone. You know the commandments you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you should not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you should not defraud, honor your father and mother. Teacher he declared all these I have kept since I was a boy. Jesus looked at him and loved him one thing you lack He said go sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come follow Me and this the man's face fell he went away sad because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to His disciples how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. Think about that for a moment here this man comes right to Jesus has a personal audience with Christ he is audibly hearing the voice of Jesus and still walks away as an unbeliever. How can that be? Today we are going to look at the anatomy of unbelief and as we look at this there are several things I want you to see and maybe it will help you get your mind around those family and friends that you have as well as the culture around us how they can be inundated with the things of the Gospel and still not respond to Christ. Do you know today there are more Christian books being written and are published than any other time in history? Do you understand that the media is full of Christian broadcasting as never before? The gospel is being heard around the world at this very moment and thanks to live streaming people can hear the gospel 24 hours a day on every continent around this globe and still people choose not to come to Christ. There are several things

that we can find from this passage to help us as we examine this man who came to Christ for us to try and get our mind around the autonomy of unbelief. First of all I want you to look at the attributes that describe him there are five of them that I want you to see right here in front of us. Number one he was a seeker the Bible tells us because he ran to Jesus that is something that you can be a seeker but being a seeker doesn't save you. You know there are a lot of churches today that you have heard the phrase for the last several decades about seeker friendly. There are people who will seek Jesus but they are not friendly with Jesus they may be seeking Jesus but they are not yet friendly with Him. It is important for us to understand that just being a seeker of Christ doesn't save you knowing in your life that there is something that is missing in your life is not enough to bring conversion but this man was a seeker. You have to applaud him for that because there was a sense of urgency in his heart and in his life and you can have a sense of urgency but not yet being a follower of Jesus Christ. The second thing he was humbled the Bible says this man has great wealth but he fell on his knees before Christ isn't that curious. He took the position of humility and submission think about that for a moment you can act the part but for it not to be real that is a truth. There is a third thing about him he was a positive encourager he looked to Jesus and said good Teacher and he used the word for complete goodness so therefore he recognized Jesus for who He was and encouraged Him. This man who was deep in the Jewish faith who had been blessed immensely financially was a positive encourager maybe that is one of the reasons why he had been blessed financially we don't know but one thing is for sure he was a positive encourager. Number four he was religiously educated when Jesus told Him to do the commandments he said I have been doing all these since I have been a boy. You see religious education of Jewish young men regardless of what kind of home financially they grew up in was given over to the fathers. The fathers educated the sons very specifically and they would use the Torah to teach them the truths of God the law of God and would reiterate it over and over and over and over again. This young man had been religiously educated and he was still knowing something was missing that is why he was a seeker. That is why he was humbled before Jesus because He knew Jesus was someone and He was something different that he had ever seen in anyone else. Number five he was personally honest he was understanding that there was something missing in his life when he cried out what must I do to inherit eternal life? You see he knew that there was a deep hole in his heart you see someone who understands that they are lost someone who has that sense of something is missing. That is the first step you see you can never be saved until you first realize that you are lost any time I hear someone say well I have always believed that always is a red light for me. Because it says to me that there has not come a true moment of conversion this man understood that though he had been religiously active that he had been doing his best all these commandments and he was acting like and speaking like he had completed all of them and had been living a righteous life he still knew something was missing. You know I have to be honest with you and tell you I visited with a lot of people over the years in ministry and all ages and it is still curious that one of the silver threads that run through my conversation with people who don't know Christ is what they have done religiously. I have visited with one gentleman at one time and he gave me a list that he had written down of all the things that he had done and where he had given his money too and religiously. It was a wonderful testimony of active action to say I want to show God that I love Him but still had never given his life to Christ. You see you only have one or two options you either lean on Jesus or you lean on your works and the Bible tells us that even our greatest righteousness is as filthy rags. Well there is another thing I want you to see here in this passage and that was the answer given to him and this is something that you and I need to look at in some great

detail. Jesus says do the commandments now He didn't quote all of the commandments probably the young man interrupted Him and before Jesus had gotten through all of the commandments. Jesus is telling him do all of them do the commandments so you have to ask yourself why did Jesus say to do all the commandments. Look at this why do you call me good there is no one good except God alone you know the commandments then He listed them and then the man says Teacher I have been doing all this since I have been a boy. Why did Jesus point him to the commandments when he asked the question what must I do to inherit eternal life? Do you know why I do I am going to tell you why here is the reason Jesus pointed him to the commandments to help him process his path knowing that he had lived a good life but a good life was not enough. He had to come to the end of himself and that is what the law does. What the law does the Ten Commandments and what the prophets tell us it helps us come to the end of our selves helping us to realize that what we do is not enough. Take your Bibles and turn over to Galatians 3 I want you to look at a couple of verses out of Galatians 3. Galatians is right before Galatians 4 this is very important Paul would write Galatians these words and let me kind of just set you up. What was going on with the Galatians Christians is that there were some Judaizers and what they were about was saying yes you can become a follower of Christ but because Jesus was a Jew you Gentiles you need to start being Jewish and you need to come under the Law just like the rest of the Jews and you need to add that to your salvation. Paul was saying no, no, no, no that is not how this works I want you to listen to what the scripture says verse 23. Before the coming of this faith we were held in custody under the Law locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the Law was put in charge of us until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come we are no longer under the supervision of the Law do you get that? What the Law did was to reveal to us our inadequacies in essence the Law was your escort and my escort into understanding that we needed Jesus because Jesus did for us what the Law could never do. The Law revealed to you your sin Jesus took your sin and therefore we are not under the Law trying to observe the Law in order to be right with God but rather we are right with God because we have turned from our sin revealed to us by the Law and given our lives to Christ. Therefore, if you tried to appease the wrath of God by your behavior and you think for one moment that you could be good enough and righteous enough in order to appease the wrath of God then you are mistaken and you don't know the Law. What the Law does is to break you down do you understand that? Jesus even took it up a step further when He said that adultery that a man commits adultery in his heart if he even thinks about it in his mind. Whoa!! It wasn't just the action it was attitude Whoa!!! Do you understand that? See the reason why the preaching of the Law and what God requires is important is because that reveals to us our brokenness does that make sense to you? That is why today I want you to listen to this that is why I really believe that the church in our culture doesn't have much power because it is full of people who have not been truly converted. You know what they have heard they have heard a bunch of positive pop psychology about think good be good live good you be happy and they haven't heard repentance they haven't heard of conversion they haven't heard of brokenness there has been few tears shed because tears aren't in today laughter is. Churches today that don't stand on the Word and preach the full account of God's Word are deceiving many people to think that all they need to have is a great attitude in order to experience God's greatness. Nothing can bring you into the presence of God quicker than when you realize how broken you are. The Law when you understand what the Law says brings you to a place that you are hopeless without the forgiveness of God that has made available only in Christ. That is why he was doing what he said focusing back let me ask you a question. Do you think that the

young man actually had kept all the commandments? I don't think so either but he was trying to say to Jesus God incarnate my conscience is clear. You see you run across a lot of people today who tell you that they never ask God for forgiveness because they have never did anything. Let me tell you something you can't be saved until realize that you need forgiveness and that you have blown it and so therefore that is what Jesus is doing He was helping that man come back into the place to understand that there was something missing and then Jesus pinpointed his particular issue when He said one thing you lack sell all you have give it to the poor He didn't say give it to my ministry he didn't say give it to the proceeds to our treasure of our discipleship group who had to be Judas He didn't tell him to do that. He just said give it to the poor and then you come and follow Me. You see what Jesus was doing He was revealing to him that there was one thing in his heart that had control over him. You know what that is exactly what happens in our lives there is one thing there is one thing that you are missing before you come to faith in Christ but it is a big one thing. For this man it was the very one thing that held him back to real faith and real commitment it was how he looked at his resources. We will talk about that in a moment but let me ask you a question some of you are looking at this man and man I can't even identify with that Jesus told me I had to sell everything I had it would be pretty easy. I could get liquid pretty quickly and in fact I am already upside down right now and there is not much to divvy out so I can do that. That is not the focus here because it may not be money controlling you it maybe something else it maybe something that has you controlled so much about your anger and it is about your unforgiveness and what has you really following Christ is your idea of self perseveration and you are so locked up and tied up and you won't let anybody in even God. Jesus is saying there maybe one thing that is holding you back what is the one thing that is holding you back? Real faith and real commitment let me ask you that don't answer out loud what is the one thing right now in your life that you think and you believe has got you held back from being full blown follower of Christ? Maybe it is the attitude that you can have one foot in the world and one foot in church and that you could be a full blown follower of Christ because you are comparing yourself to everybody else. Nothing could be further from the truth New Testament Christianity is a Christianity that gives everything to Christ and whatever He wants YES is the answer. Is there anything that is holding you back for being a full blown follower of Jesus Christ? There is a third thing I want you to see and that is the actions that follow there are three things I want you to see about this young man when he realizes that he wasn't going to do what Jesus said. The Bible says his face fell the root word for the word fell and it is describing his countenance it is the Greek word ??? and it is the picture of clouds that have been lowered dark clouds. Before there was a physical action to walk away from Christ there was a countenance change. Then the Bible says number two he went away sad think about this the young man had an audience with Jesus but when Jesus pointed out one thing that had held him back from being a true follower his countenance fell and he went away sad. Can I just say to you there is no joy there is no peace and you are not going to find it when you are held captive within. It will affect your heart and your countenance. I have to be honest with you I have a great memory of the day that I gave my life to Jesus I see it in my mind's eye as if it was just happening yesterday. When I prayed to receive Jesus and I was 12 years old when I did I got off my knees in that pastor's office after I invited Jesus to take total charge of my life and it was as if the weight of a thousand pounds had been lifted off my little shoulders. I remember walking down that hall in that second story of that church building skipping happy ran down the stairs got on my bicycle headed back to home and I began to sing. I didn't sing a hymn I didn't sing a chorus because that was in the 60s when I gave my life to Christ and chorus were in I didn't sing a chorus didn't sing a hymn

do you know what I sang? I sang a brand new song I started singing Jesus thank You for saving me and I just started making up words telling Him I was free and singing out loud as I rode my bike home. I don't remember those words I don't remember the melody probably wouldn't have made it to the top ten anyway but it was flowing out of my heart because there was peace. There was joy because I knew now that I was a child of God that I was forgiven that I was saved that I was His and then all of my sin was gone. I knew I was set free I will never forget that sense of being free and full of joy and I laughed and I wept with joy because He had forgiven me and I was now made His. WOAHA! And I tell you that's what is the Christian life is to be about Jesus talked about that when you follow Him that rivers of living water will flow from your inmost being wow. Your life is not about your happiness but your life is about Jesus and when it is about Jesus all the stuff dead and all of the character of Christ and all of the joy of Jesus and all of the peace of God will flow from within. There is not one more thing precious than that in your life and God wants that to happen all of the time in your life. He really does He wants you to live like that but here is a third thing that described this man he continued to hold on to what held him you see that is what is going on the reason he couldn't get a hold of his wealth get rid of his wealth because it had a greater hold on him then he thought he had on it. You see that is the problem I want us to look at a couple of things first of all number four I want you to look at the attitudes that defined him and sometimes can define us and there are several principals I want you to look at this man. Also examine your own heart in life number one we glean from this that one can act the part of submission but not fully commit just because someone acts like they are submitting doesn't mean they have fully committed to Christ. You can't know the players without the program and only God has the program. You can't know someone's heart you don't know where someone is spiritually because many people can act the part that they are followers of Jesus because there is part of submission they maybe submit their schedule or they may submit their money or they may submit their time. But there has never been full blown commitment. Number two one can be extremely religious but still empty and seeking this is the epitome of this man he knew the Law he was trying to practice the Law he was religious but he was completely empty. There are a lot of people today who are very religious but they are completely lost they may have a denomination on their back they may have membership in a church they may have the heritage of the faith of their parents all around them but still they still don't know Christ. They feel like something is missing deep down inside and you know what? Something is missing deep down inside because you could be religious but still empty inside and still seeking. I hope you are not there but you need to listen on. Third one can be honest and transparent but fail to follow this young man was extremely honest with Christ I mean he was transparent he was opening up his life. You see you can be open and you could be honest but you can fail to follow Christ. Number four one can expect God to add to our already built life but refuse Him because He wants us to start over do you understand that? Here is the deal this young man already had everything together he had money whether he earned it or he had inherited it all that. He had a place of financial security and he was religious and do you know what he was looking for he was just looking for the one thing that he lacked and he just wanted God to add it to his already built life. You see God doesn't do add ons and we are going to find out a little more about that maybe that is what describes you. You are just expecting God to add something on and that is why you are worshipping here today maybe that is why you are watching today because you just feel like I need to add this on for my week you see God doesn't do add ons like that. There is a fifth thing that I want to share with you that one can actual hear the voice of God be in His presence and still choose to reject Him personally and His teaching specifically. How is that possible that

you can actually hear the voice of God the words of God and still refuse to follow Him? Here it is the power of one's own will that God will not override that is the answer God will never override your will. I want you to listen to these four critical words that I am about to read Jesus said in Luke 13:34 Jerusalem Jerusalem you how killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you. How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you were not willing. You see God will never override your will but He will allow you to walk away as empty as you came to Him if you choose not to give Him total charge of your life. There is one last thing I want to share with you and that is the avenue that was offered to him an offer to us as well. It is critical that you and I understand these principals here it is this is where you and I need to take this away today. Number one Jesus doesn't want to add to your life He wants to be your life. Say it again Jesus doesn't want to add to your life He wants to be your life. He is not looking to be part of your life He wants to be your life does that make sense? He is not an add on He is not an addition He is not a membership He wants to be your life that is why Paul wrote I am crucified with Christ the old life I used to live that is not mine I totally belong to Him. You need to hear that second of all Jesus doesn't want what you bring He wants to give you what you don't have. You see you don't need to bring anything to Him except your sin there is nothing that you can add to the equation to give you salvation it is not Jesus' death plus whatever you bring to the table. Communion wonderful that is not going to get you to Heaven baptism whether by sprinkling or by immersion that doesn't complete the equation it is Jesus plus nothing that gives someone salvation. Do you understand that? That is important you trying to add anything to the finished work of Christ and you have crossed the line that is where religion kicks in and the relationship with Jesus goes out. God doesn't want you to bring anything to the equation. Number three Jesus loves you regardless of your decision but your decision will make you either feel sad or make you feel loved. Isn't it curious here that Mark adds in this passage in verse 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him? You know initially when I first read that I thought it is probably the word philao that he liked Him as a friend ah ah no it was the Greek word agape He loved him. In fact the context in the way that action verb is described literally says Jesus fell in love with him. Let me tell you something Jesus loves you even if you choose not to follow Him but listen love rejected one day will turn to wrath. Number four Jesus is not swayed by what others think about you but His mood about how you think about Him. You know as I look at this man this is probably one of the saddest stories in all of Scripture you know why because he couldn't come to the end of himself and a lot of us we have a difficult time coming to the end of ourselves. Sometimes it is those ministrable moments that are brought to us out of financial pain relationship pain physical pain and spiritual emptiness that brings us to the point where we are ready to say oh God be merciful to me a sinner. That is where belief starts you know I know that you and I all have many friends and family members who have never had a true conversion experience in Christ and they are good people they are great friends and some you would look at and go man they used to walk with Jesus but now they don't. How could they continue on with what they are doing and what is going on in their lives and not turn from their sin and give Jesus total charge of their life? I don't know but I know that God can give you all the blessings in the world and that is not going to be enough to fill an empty heart. Your empty heart will never be filled until you come to the end of yourself and let me ask you a question have you actually come to the end of yourself? Or have you just been fine with your religious heritage? Have you truly turned from your sin broken over your sin? Understanding your separateness from God and chosen to give Jesus charge of your life? If you will do that Jesus will change your heart from the inside out and you will step over to the other side and be a full

blown follower of Christ. He will love you regardless of what you do think about that for a moment. Every person you know every family member you have who doesn't know Christ Jesus loves them He still loves them but He will not make you do what you do not want to do.